

Mental Health Online

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PROPOSITIONS
belonging to the dissertation

Mental Health Online
The enactment of expertise on bipolar disorder on American and French
online platforms

by Claudia Egger

1. Expertise is a practical achievement, realized through coordination and affective labor among stakeholders who occupy multiple and shifting positions across a complex ecosystem.
2. The medium matters. Enacting mental health expertise on the internet requires more than just transferring skills from the offline to the online world.
3. Access to mental health information online will never be empowering, emancipatory, or democratizing in itself, but will always depend on the extent to which different actors are involved.
4. Official bodies can no longer ignore public controversies on mental health. To remain legitimate sources of knowledge and information, they should engage directly with topics even where the scientific insights currently available are insufficient or uncertain.
5. Online engagement carries risks for people with mental health diagnoses and for their caregivers. Users are therefore entitled to know what data are collected about them and how they are used.
6. Science and Technology Studies scholars should expand their understanding of social practices to include affective labor in their analyses of how expertise is enacted, how different types of knowledge are produced, and how scientific controversies are resolved.
7. As platform owners have become powerful gatekeepers, scholars studying online practices need to challenge the transformation of online user-generated content into private property as a matter of urgency.
8. Online platforms for (mental) health are best understood as complementary to face-to-face encounters with (mental) health professionals rather than as simple substitutes of them.
9. Being in good (mental) health is a basic requirement for people to flourish and lead a good life. To achieve this, (mental) healthcare needs to be universally available and accessible.
10. Reducing complex insights and endeavors to numbers or readily observable types of 'impact' constitutes a form of violence perpetrated against the very societal ideals underpinning valorization.
11. The inspiration, creativity, and relaxation that good experimental novels and music generate often sharpen one's thinking and lead to a deeper understanding of the topic one studies. They also help put the PhD trajectory into a broader perspective, which turns out to be quite necessary at times.

December 4th, 2019